

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00

IO-06 NSCE-00 ACDA-10 PM-03 OC-01 CCO-00 A-01

OPR-01 HA-02 SP-02 SCS-01 CA-01 SY-02 DODE-00

L-01 PA-01 EB-04 FS-01 MMO-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 H-01

ICAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /072 W

-----001948 171636Z /45

O 171523Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9759

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4920

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CASC, CG

SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: CONSULTATIONS WITH BELGIANS AND FRENCH
ON POSSIBLE RESCUE OPERATION

REF: A) KINSHASA 4852 B) CUTLER/SWING TELECON MAY 17

1. MEETING MORNING MAY 17 WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROSS AND
BELGIAN AMBASSADOR RITTWEGER DE MOOR (JUST RETURNED FROM
BRUSSELS) REVEALED FOLLOWING:

2. ROSS STRONGLY FAVORS EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPERATION (PRE-
FERABLY BY FRENCH, BELGIANS AND US) TO SECURE SAFETY OF EX-
PATRIATES AT KOLWEZI. HIS POSITION BASED ON FOLLOWING
CONSIDERATIONS:

--AT LEAST SOME SECTIONS OF KOLWEZI BELIEVE STILL BE
IN FAZ HANDS.

--LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG REBELS IS FAVORABLE FACTOR FOR
MILITARY OPERATION AGAINST THEM; AT SAME TIME, THIS PLACES
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EXPATRIATES IN EVEN MORE URGENT DANGER OF MISTREATMENT.

--AS OF NOW, REBELS DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN RE-
GROUPING EXPATRIATES, WHICH WOULD MAKE OPERATION MORE DAN-
GEROUS ONCE ACHIEVED.

--THERE ARE NO LONGER NON-GOZ COMMUNICATIONS WITH KOLWEZI,
GECAMINES TELEPHONE CONTACTS TO LUBUMBASHI HAVING BEEN DISCON-
TINUED LAST NIGHT, AND GECAMINES CHIEF RENARD REPORTEDLY

SEIZED BY REBELS AND INJURED.

--EXPATRIATES STILL HAVE SOME FOOD AND WATER AVAILABLE,
BUT UNCERTAIN HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST.

3. RITTWEGER DE MOOR SAID HIS EMBASSY HAS SENT SIMILAR
ANALYSIS TO BRUSSELS, NOTING IN ADDITION THE CONCERN THAT
TROUBLES COULD SOON SPREAD TO LUBUMBASHI AND ELSEWHERE IN SHABA.

4. BOTH FRENCH AND BELGIAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT RESCUE OPERATION
WOULD ENTAIL SERIOUS POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND THEY AGREED
THERE WAS SOME CHANCE THE KOLWEZI REBELS MIGHT DECIDE TO WITH-
DRAW IN THE FACE OF MERE THREAT OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION (INTEL
INDICATES THEY HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADVISED OF THIS POSSIBILITY)
AND IF FAZ DEPLOYMENTS PROVIDED THEM WITH SAFE RETREAT ROUTE
SOUTH TO THE BORDER. ON THE OTHER HAND, BOTH FEEL DANGER TO
LIVES OF EXPATRIATES IS SUFFICIENTLY IMMINENT TO JUSTIFY RESCUE
OPERATION SOONEST. AS ROSS HAS PUT IT TO PARIS, "IT'S THE
BEST OF AVAILABLE OPTIONS, ALL OF WHICH ARE BAD."

5. MAKING DECISION ON THIS MATTER IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF
OUR POOR KNOWLEDGE OF ACTUAL SECURITY SITUATION IN KOLWEZI AND
DIMINISHING COMMUNICATIONS IS SERIOUS COMPLICATING FACTOR. FAZ
MAY STILL HAVE A CHANCE OF DRIVING REBELS OUT; HOWEVER, WE ARE
NOT ENCOURAGED BY REPORT LATE MORNING MAY 17 THAT REBELS HAVE
ATTACKED FAZ-CONTROLLED CP AND THAT ITS COMMUNICATIONS WITH FAZ
HEADQUARTERS HAVE STOPPED. (WE ARE TRYING TO CONFIRM THIS REPORT.
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PERHAPS OUR BEST SOURCE OF INFO ON SITUATION IN KOLWEZI IS
AMERICAN CIS EMPLOYEE (MOODY) WHO MANAGED TO GET FROM TOWN TO
CIS CAMP THIS MORNING IN TIME TO JOIN LAST GROUP OF EVACUEES.
WE HAVE ASKED HIM TO BE BROUGHT TO KINSHASA TODAY FOR
DEBRIEFING.

6. OUR BEST ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION IS THAT RISK TO
CIVILIANS' LIVES AT KOLWEZI WARRANTS MOVING AHEAD
URGENTLY WITH PLANS FOR RESCUE OPERATION. BELGIANS AND FRENCH
SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD AND SUPPLY ALL OF PERSONNEL WHO WOULD
BE ON THE GROUND, COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR CAPABILITIES AND
NATIONAL INTERESTS. RECOMMEND STRONGLY THAT US ROLE BE LIMITED
TO LOGISTICS, SUCH AS GASOLINE SUPPLIES ALREADY REQUESTED BY
BELGIANS, TRANSPORT AND OTHER BACKUP FACILITIES. WE SHOULD NOT
REPEAT NOT INSERT COMBAT PERSONNEL UNLESS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED.

7. AS OF TIME OF OUR MEETING, NEITHER FRENCH NOR BELGIAN
AMBASSADORS HAVE RAISED RESCUE OPERATION WITH MOBUTU. HOWEVER,
WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT THEIR MILITARY REPS HAVE GONE INTO
JOINT PLANNING SESSION WITH FAZ FOR THIS PURPOSE. BELGIAN
HAD ASKED WHETHER ZAMISH REPS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE WITH
C130 EXPERTISE, COULD JOIN AS WELL. ASSUMING THIS IS WANTED BY

GOZ AS WELL, RECOMMEND AND REQUEST CONCURRENCE THAT WE
PARTICIPATE AS WE VIEW APPROPRIATE.
CUTLER

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